

## Current Status of Carbon Monoxide

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reclassified Maricopa County to a serious non-attainment area for carbon monoxide (CO) on August 28, 1996. A serious area plan was submitted to EPA July 1999. The plan included transportation control strategies, clean burning fuels, and measures to offset growth in emissions due to growth in vehicle miles traveled.

In July 1999, the Governor requested a determination of attainment from EPA based on two consecutive years without a monitored violation. Concentrations of CO greater than 9 parts per million averaged over 8 hours are counted as an exceedance. However, the attainment status for Maricopa County is based on no more than one exceedance in each of two consecutive years. EPA has indicated that they will process the request along with the CO Serious Area Plan. The new attainment date for a serious CO area is December 31, 2000.

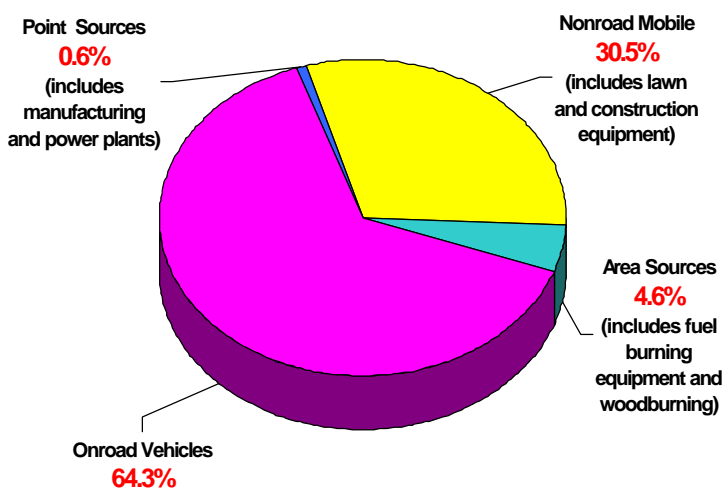
If Maricopa County were to exceed the CO standard in the next CO “season” (fall of 1999 through spring 2000), EPA would place the attainment determination request on hold. There must be two years of clean data at the time of redesignation. Maricopa County would have to wait two more years to file for redesignation for attainment.

Maricopa County recorded a CO exceedance on November 29, 1999 at the state’s Grand Avenue monitoring site. This was the first CO exceedance since January of 1996. The exceedance does not impact our standing with the EPA, but any subsequent exceedance at the same monitoring location within the same year would impact our plan.

Government and organizations across the board continue to strive to meet clean air standards for CO, which are designed to protect the public health. The invisible, odorless CO robs the body’s ability to use oxygen.

## Where does carbon monoxide come from?

### 2000 Carbon Monoxide Emissions



Cooler temperatures and stagnant air in the wintertime hold pollutants in the Valley, causing increased levels of carbon monoxide.

Most carbon monoxide comes from vehicles. However, wood fires, barbecues, gasoline lawnmowers, and garden equipment also contribute to the pollution problem in the Valley.

## Why is carbon monoxide harmful?

Carbon monoxide acts as an oxygen deprivation agent. Healthy individuals may not experience physical symptoms; however, people with heart conditions and other chronic illnesses may experience some unhealthy feelings.

On high pollution days, when carbon monoxide approaches the unhealthy level, persons with asthma or respiratory problems can experience difficulty breathing. Experiencing reduced lung capacity is like trying to breathe through a straw for five minutes. Persons with heart conditions or other chronic illness should reduce their outdoor activity.

## What strategies are in place to reduce CO?

To help reduce CO, there are a number of air quality initiatives in place in Maricopa County.

- The Maricopa County Vehicle Repair & Retrofit Program is designed to encourage vehicle owners to repair or retrofit their high emitting vehicles to meet the mandated emissions standards. Since the programs' inception in January 1999, 1,071 vehicles have been fixed, eliminating 250 metric tons of pollution from the air annually.
- Under the nation's first Commercial Lawnmower Retirement Program, 1780 old polluting gas mowers were retired in four weekends and replaced with cleaner burning EPA-certified lawn mowers. The 1998/1999 programs combined have reduced 617 tons of VOCs and 4523 tons of CO from the Valley's air. In 1999, the program was expanded to include gas powered garden equipment. Five hundred and sixty-three pieces of garden equipment were retired.
- The county, along with the Maricopa Association of Governments and the cities, have standardized clean burning fireplace ordinances, which limit the type of devices that can be used in new construction.
- Maricopa County's Trip Reduction Program requires businesses with 50 or more employees to submit plans to reduce single-occupant vehicle miles traveled to and from work.
- Instituting no-burn days during high air pollution advisories.
- The Smoking Vehicle Program has been set up to identify and notify car owners whose cars may be contributing emissions and may need repairs. More than 70 calls a day are reported.
- CARB Phase 2 Reformulated Gasoline is implemented during the winter months.
- More stringent emission standards for the I/M 240 Vehicle Emissions Test will begin January 2000.
- The Clean Air Campaign is a public education and marketing campaign that encourages the use of alternative forms of transportation and other pollution reducing strategies.

## What can you do to reduce carbon monoxide?

- Keep your car tuned.
- Change your oil every 3000 to 5000 miles.
- For up-to-date air quality information, visit us at [www.maricopa.gov/sbeap/airday.htm](http://www.maricopa.gov/sbeap/airday.htm).
- Carpool, telecommute or take the bus. To find a carpool or vanpool partner, call Valley Metro at (602) 262-7433.
- Reduce driving on days when there is a high pollution advisory.
- Don't burn firewood in fireplaces when an advisory has been issued.
- Combine errands to reduce "cold starts" on your car.